



## Standard Days Method®

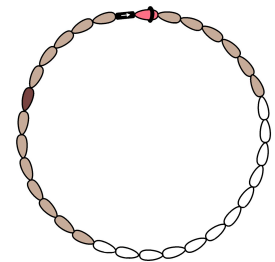
### What is the Standard Days Method®?

The Standard Days Method® is a simple natural or fertility awareness based method (FABM) of family planning. FABMS help couples determine when sexual intercourse may or may not result in pregnancy.

The Standard Days Method® is a calendar-based method that identifies a fixed fertile window in the woman's cycle (days 8 to 19) when a couple should avoid sexual intercourse if they wish to prevent pregnancy. All other days in a woman's cycle are considered non-fertile. Women trying to become pregnant are encouraged to have intercourse during this window of time.

### How does Standard Days Method® work and who can use it?

Women who choose to use the Standard Days Method® can track their cycles using CycleBeads®. This string of color-coded beads helps a woman know which days are fertile every month and allows her to keep track of her cycle length. The red bead represents the first day of her period when she begins counting days by moving the ring one bead each day. White beads represent the fertile days. The brown beads are days when intercourse is not likely to result in pregnancy. The darker brown bead alerts a woman if her cycle is shorter than 26 days, indicating she may need to use a different natural method.



Any woman desiring a natural, hormone free method can use the Standard Days Method® *if* she has cycles lasting 26 to 32 days. A woman who usually gets her period every month has cycles in this range. Women who recently had a baby or are breastfeeding, as well as women who recently discontinued a hormonal contraceptive may need to follow special instructions and talk to their healthcare provider before using Standard Days Method®.

### How effective is the Standard Days Method® in helping a couple avoid pregnancy?

The Standard Days Method® is 95% effective at preventing pregnancy with perfect use and more than 88% effective with typical use.<sup>1</sup> It is slightly less effective than hormonal contraceptives, such as the Pill, but better than barrier contraceptives, such as condoms.<sup>2</sup>

### What are some advantages and disadvantages of Standard Days Method®?

**Advantages:** The Standard Days Method® is an effective modern FABM that is easy to teach and learn. It is low cost and has no side effects. In addition the method helps women learn about their menstrual cycle and involves men in family planning, as the couple must discuss and decide how to manage the fertile days.

**Disadvantages:** As with most family planning methods, Standard Days Method® does not provide protection against STDs. Standard Days Method® requires abstinence during fertile days. Standard Days Method® may only be used by women with cycles that usually last 26 to 32 days (no more than one out-of-range cycle in a year) and cannot be used by women in the postpartum period or who recently used a hormonal contraceptive.

### Where can I find more information on the Standard Days Method®?

Georgetown University Institute for Reproductive Health: [www.irh.org](http://www.irh.org).

## Sources



1. Arévalo M., Jennings V., Sinai I. "Efficacy of a new method of family planning: the Standard Days Method." *Contraception* 65 (2002): 333–338.
2. Trussell, J. "Contraceptive failure in the United States." *Contraception* 83 (2011): 397-404.